

# NEW ORLEANS

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# 'FLYING AXMEN' IN CARNIVAL

# STATES-ITEM

OF PROGRESS

## RED COMET

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A.

PRICE 10c

# BOOKED MURDER

## Report Two Confess Strangling

Two young men who said they are members of a national "Flying Axmen" motorcycle gang have been booked with murder after reportedly admitting the Mardi Gras eve strangulation death of a 24-year-old Georgia civil engineer.

Homicide detectives said the pair—James E. "Bulldog" Cripps, of Saginaw, Mich., and Larry Joe "Rat" Purkey, Seymour, Ind., both 20—demonstrated how they used a "German death hold" to kill Taylor West McLaurin Jr., of Charleston, W. Va. His body was thrown into a City Park lagoon.

The corpse was discovered floating in the lagoon March 8 by two Chalmette youngsters on a boating expedition.

Officers said McLaurin was robbed of \$100.

Cripps and Purkey were arrested early today by homicide officers, following a six-day investigation.

**POLICE SAID** they had been suspicious of Purkey since March 7, following his arrest with six others at 941



**JAMES E.  
"BULLDOG" CRIPPS**

Dumaine, where a youth, Thomas Ed Dardar, was found dead amid hippie paraphernalia and a quantity of narcotics.

Also found at the Dumaine st. address were several automobile radio antennas sharpened into bayonets, police said.

Police said they learned that Purkey had a motorcycle traveling companion and began shadowing him following his release yesterday from the central lockup.

The officers said Purkey met Cripps in the 600 block of Iberville last night. They immediately were picked up for questioning.

**IT WAS DURING** questioning later that the two reportedly admitted their participation in the death of McLaurin and demonstrated their German World War II strangulation method.

Homicide Chief James Kruebbe said Cripps just had

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**LARRY JOE  
"RAT" PURKEY**

## Arrest--

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arrived back in town after making a riding trip out of the city since Mardi Gras.

The officer said Cripps had been arrested at Crowley for operating his motorcycle without a license and was not released by Crowley police until yesterday afternoon.

**KRUEBBE SAID** Cripps and Purkey told of having met up with McLaurin sometime shortly before the Proteus parade the night before Mardi Gras.

They said McLaurin was flashing money. They spent several hours with him before the three went to City Park.

A Proteus doubloon and several Carnival throws were found on McLaurin's body.

Strangulation marks were found on McLaurin's body.

Detectives said Purkey and Cripps demonstrated how with the German death hold they would be able to stand in front of their victim and cause his death without knocking off his glasses.

**ASSISTING IN** the near week-long investigation, Kruebbe said, were Det. Sgt. Eugene Fields and Detectives James Miller, Sgt. Richard Hunter and Robert Buras.

Capt. Kruebbe said the "Flying Axmen" is a group of motorcycle enthusiasts which met here for Mardi Gras to form a national "wheels" gang to steal motorcycles.

**BESIDES CRIPPS** and Purkey, the officers said, there are a number of other members either still in New Orleans or in Texas, California and Miami.

Kruebbe said Purkey and Cripps admitted they were planning to steal four motorcycles in New Orleans later this week.

The officer said he expects to make other arrests in connection with the death of McLaurin.